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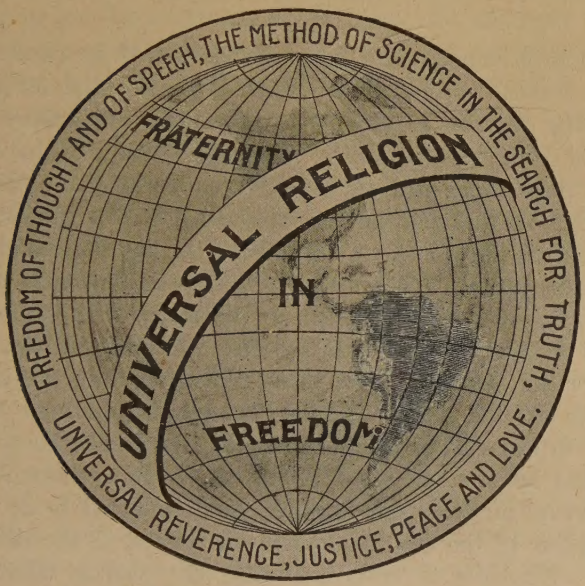
FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND OF SPEECH, THE METHOD OF SCIENCE IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH,
FRATERNITY
UNIVERSAL RELIGION
IN
FREEDOM
UNIVERSAL REVERENCE, JUSTICE, PEACE AND LOVE.

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MOSES: LIBERATOR AND LEGISLATOR.*

By Alfred W. Martin.

The most commanding figure in the sacred scriptures of the Jews is Moses. Three of the world's great religions unite in recognizing in him a man of transcendent importance in the sphere of religion. Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, all three alike look up to Moses as the mouth-piece of the Most High, as the medium through which the divine commandment was communicated to mankind. It has been said that a man is best judged, best estimated by the shadow that he casts, by the influence that he exerts. If we accept this standard and apply it to Moses, we have to recoginze the fact that the shadow of Moses lies athwart thirty-three centuries, that the influence which he exerted can be traced through thirty-three hundred years. In order to understand his influence, in order to appreciate what he was and what he did, we have to remember that the immortal message that has been communicated to us through the prophets of the Old Testament was rooted in the religion of Moses. We have to remember that the psalms which every Sunday are sung or recited in the Christian churches of the world, owe their original inspiration to the personality and teaching of Moses. To him must be traced that strong and intense family affection which has preserved the individuality of the Hebrews through all these centuries of persecution and oppression. To him must be traced that love of independence which has always been a characteristic of the Jew. To him again we may trace that burning patriotism that flamed in the breasts of the Maccabees, that resisted the onslaughts of Greek armies and Roman legions, enabling the people to enjoy a whole century of independence in their Palestinian home.

*Fifth in a series of twelve discourses on "Great Religious Leaders," stenographically reported by G. H. Ballou, Sunday, Feb. 2nd, 1902.

To appreciate and understand the personality of Moses and his work, we have to remember that Jesus and his disciples, Paul and the apostles, James the first Christian bishop, are all direct descendants of Moses. We have to remember, too, that the chief contributions to our modern civilization that were bequeathed in the Middle Ages were the product of Jewish thought and Jewish enterprise. It was they, the Jews, who founded the first universities on the continent of Europe. It was they who organized and sustained commerce in an age when commerce stood for culture, for breadth, for catholicity, for education. It was the Jews who in an age when superstition was rife, when faith was blind, when ignorance was regarded as a passport to Paradise, fostered education, advanced the science of medicine and furthered the arts and sciences. Maimonides, Moses Mendelssohn, Spinoza, Heine, Auerbach, are a few of the famous names in the list of Jewish contributors to our civilization.

To the everlasting shame of the Christian religion it is that the persecution, the bigotry, the narrowness, the hatred from which these people have suffered during so many centuries should still exist today,—should still be manifested toward a people who, I do not hesitate to say, are the most self-respecting, the most self-reliant, the most self-supporting and the most law-abiding of all the citizens in our mixed population! And I will go one step further and say that nothing less than inhuman is the prejudice and the bigotry which causes even little children, the boys and girls of wealthy and refined Jewish parents, to come home from school crying because of the indignities that have been heaped upon them by the children of Christian parents—Christian parents who owe their deepest religious inspiration to Moses and his successors! Let it not be forgotten that whatever criticism Christians may make upon the capacity of the Jew for bargaining, for trading and for money making, it must be traced directly to Christian enmity, Christian prejudice and Christian hate. And again, let it not be forgotten that the vitality and endurance of the Jews through all these centuries would have absolutely and forever died out long ago had it not been for the inspiration and the influence of Moses.

His personality, unfortunately, has been very greatly obscured by the mists of myth and legend so that it becomes exceedingly difficult for us to determine with exactness what he said and what he did. But it is the noble task of biblical criticism, to dispel this mist that envelopes and enshrouds his personality. It is the noble task of biblical criticism to show the man forth in all the fullness and clearness of his personality; the task of criticism to substitute for the Moses of imagination, for the Moses of orthodox pulpits the Moses of reality, the Moses of history. It is its task to show us how very natural and inevitable it was that at a later day people should have magnified the name of Moses with miracles, with wonders, with signs, and lovingly attributed to him all the rules and regulations and customs of their people. Thanks to the labors of a long list of splendid geniuses all the way from Moses Mendelssohn and Astruc down, thanks to the labors of principally Dutch, German and French scholars, we are now enabled for the first time to read the first five books of the Bible intelligently. As long as it was supposed that these first five books were written by Moses they were absolutely unintelligible and confusing and puzzling; but through the labors of those scholars we now know that these first five books were not the work of Moses at all; that they are the work of at least six different authors, writing at different periods throughout fifteen hundred years. We know now, as some one has wittily said, that the religion of Moses is a religious mosaic! Not the work of a single author, but a composite work and the work of at least six different authors is the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. We also know as the result of this scholarship that these first five books were finally edited one thousand years after Moses has been buried in his unmarked grave.

We also know that the legislation in these five books represents three distinct legal codes, corresponding to three distinct periods in the development of the Hebrew people. From these five books we derive all that we know about the life and work of Moses. Stripping this story of his life from its mythical and legendary elements so far as this can be determined, let us brief-

ly recall the dramatic career of this illustrious founder of the religion of Israel.

He was born about the year 1360 B. C., in Egypt, the son of Hebrew parents who were slaves in Egypt. If we can trust the tradition, it appears that his mother saved him from the possible infanticide, which had been decreed by a cruel Egyptian king for all male infants, by concealing him in a basket of bulrushes on the banks of the Nile, where one day, by chance, the daughter of the king found the babe and took him home, nurtured him, reared him, educated him. In speech, in manners, in dress he was an Egyptian; but at heart he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Deeply touched by the sufferings to which his people had been subjected, he longed with all his soul to free them from their bondage, if possible. Yet why should he, adopted into a royal family, lapped in luxury, surrounded with everything that could gratify the taste of either head or heart,—why should he under such conditions, like the noble Buddha, make "the great renunciation," turn his back on the royal palace and devote himself to the salvation of his people? Simply because there burned in his heart a passion to make the world happier, better, nobler.

One day he saw an Egyptian officer maltreating one of the Hebrew slaves, and in his indignation he slew that Egyptian on the spot. He was compelled to flee for his life, and made his way down into Midian, where he married a daughter of the priest of the Midianites. These Midianites are repeatedly referred to in the Old Testament as merchantmen, as being thoroughly conversant with the different trade routes of that section of country. Unquestionably all the news that was brought by the caravans would reach the ears of the priest, and through him the ears of Moses, and it is not at all unlikely that through these tidings, concerning the condition of things in the wilderness and the adjoining countries, that Moses conceived the idea of leading his people out from the bondage of Egypt, into the liberty of the wilderness and the land adjoining the Jordan.

So, then, the plan of liberation is conceived. He retires to the desert to shape and mature his plans, because solitude is always necessary to the development of genius. His plan

matured in solitude, he hears a voice out of the burning bush, that bush a symbol of the voice of conscience, telling him that it is his duty to try to free his people. As he hears that voice he reflects on that miserable horde of slaves pitted against the magnificent cohorts of the Pharaohs, and it seems impossible to accomplish the task, when the voice is heard again saying, "I am that I am." In other words, the right *will* prevail, justice *will* triumph, go lead thy people out of bondage. And so once more in the history of humanity, the great miracle of justice is performed, and the great task of deliverance is completed.

What route he took is a matter of conjecture. Those who are most competent to inform us are of the opinion that he led the people up to the head of the Gulf of Suez, and being familiar with the strange phenomenon of the waters at the head of that gulf, he took advantage of the low tide and high-blowing east wind to guide his people, dry shod, to the further shore. And then, when the Egyptians came on from the rear, they were embarrassed with their war chariots,—so the pursued reached the other shore in safety.

Many and long and tedious were the delays of this journey; but it is evident that Moses had the genius to quell impatience without at the same time quenching enthusiasm, so that all the way from the start to the finish of that mighty migration the trumpets of the exodus throbbed with the gospel of the rights of man.

The task of deliverance completed, Moses addressed himself to the greater task of using the freedom that he has attained, for he knows that freedom is only a negative advantage. He knows that freedom is good for nothing unless it can be used for some great and glorious end, so he addresses himself to the positive task of using the freedom which the people now have. It is here that his genius shines at its greatest height, for consummate and commanding as is the genius which is required to liberate a people from slavery, more commanding and consummate still is the genius which can take that freedom and in it organize the work of a constructive statesman. To that task, then, the great Moses addressed himself.

Once more he goes into solitude, this time into the mountain, at the foot of which the people had rested. And up in the mountain he formulates his plans for the new society. He comes down from the mountain, and the glow of inspiration is on his face. But as he sees his people dancing around a golden calf, perpetuating the superstitions of Egypt, his eyes flash with scorn, his cheeks become flushed with fierce indignation, his beard trembles with emotion. You know in a moment he will dash those rules and regulations on stone to the ground.

It is just here that the genius of Michael Angelo shines as nowhere else. The great sculptor of Florence took this dramatic moment in the life of Moses, and made it the subject of his sculptural composition, the famous statue of Moses in the church of Sanpietro in Vincoli in Rome.

When he recovers from his fit of indignation, Moses goes up into the mountain, prostrates himself on the ground and prays to his god Yahveh to be good enough to forgive the sin of these people, but if he will not forgive it, then he says, "Blot me, I pray thee, out of thy Book of Life." He is learning the lesson of patience and humility, and he comes down from the mountain practicing that lesson, and we are told in the book of Numbers that "the man Moses became exceeding humble. There was no one more humble than he in all the face of the earth."

Now that the great task of liberation has been finished and consummated with the greater task of constructive statesmanship, the principal work of Moses is at an end.

Concerning the ten commandments, as we have them in the Old Testament, let it not be supposed that these ten commandments in their entirety are the work of Moses. We must remember that there are two versions of these ten commandments in the Old Testament. One is in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, and the other is in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy. These two versions differ radically in the ground that is presented for keeping the Sabbath Day holy. It is hardly likely that one and the same man would have written the two varying versions. And then again, we have to remember that at least three of the ten commandments apply to a state of civilization that had not yet

materialized when Moses was doing his work. The ninth commandment, the tenth commandment, the last half of the fifth commandment apply to a highly organized civilization, such as was not realized in the history of Israel for at least five hundred years after the death of Moses. If Moses wrote any laws, the record has been lost. When, therefore, we ask, do we derive our knowledge of the legislation of Moses? The answer is, from the earliest of those three legal codes referred to a little while ago, here in these five books. In them we find three codes of legislation, one belonging to the primitive period, the next belonging to the early prophetic period, and the third and most highly developed belonging to the levitical or priestly period. Now if we go back to that primitive code, we see here certain laws, rules and regulations which exactly fit the conditions of a primitive and nomadic people, such as the Jews were at the time of Moses.

To illustrate: "He that smiteth a man so that he die shall surely be put to death. He that smiteth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death." Notice here that death is the penalty for murder, and also the penalty for striking one's father or one's mother. "He that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death." Once more, death the only penalty recognized for such an offence as cursing one's father or one's mother. "If men contend and one smite the other with stone or with fist and he die not, but keep his bed, if he rise again and walk abroad on his staff, then shall he that smite him be quit when he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed." So you see one of the means by which justice was to be secured was that of pecuniary compensation. And a little later on we see that the other method was *retaliation*, "You shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe," thus indicating that at this early stage in the development of this wonderful people, we find the law of retaliation and pecuniary compensation obtained as the method of securing justice. Very remarkable, indeed, is one feature in the statesmanship of Moses. When he

attempted to organize these people he did not aim at establishing an empire, no, nor an oligarchy, but a commonwealth whose fundamental principle should be "live and let live." The land, he says, belongs to the Lord thy God, therefore no man shall monopolize the land. And I do not wonder at Mr. Henry George finding a prophet-in embryo of the "Single Tax" in the gospel of Moses on the subject of land. Whenever he speaks of the land he says, "The land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," or, "The land which the Lord thy God lendeth thee," conveying the idea that no one man has the right to monopolize all the land, that the principle of live and let live must characterize the new nation. So we read again that the reaper must always leave something for the gleaner. An ox must not be muzzled when he treads out the corn. Rest one day in seven must be accorded to every beast, every working man. And the working man of today who enjoys his one day in seven has Moses primarily to thank for that supreme boon of his toil.

Concerning the theism of Moses ,his belief in God, we observe that his God was called Yahveh, a tribal god, the origin of which is quite uncertain. After the deliverance was achieved, he became the God of the people, for they thought this deliverance was a token of the favor of this god of Moses.

How much the Hebrews derived from the Egyptians is also a very uncertain question. Surely no ethical or religious teaching did they derive from the Egyptians so far as we know. It may be, perhaps, that the rite of circumcision, the ark of the covenant, the dress and observances of the priest, the urim and thummim upon his breast, were all Egyptian in their origin, and derived from the Egyptians; but this is all a matter of conjecture. The remarkable fact to notice is this: that the Hebrews and the Egyptians differed so radically in their conception of the hereafter. The Egyptians, you know, have a ritual of the dead, and in this ritual there is a very complete and detailed description of the conditions of life after death. The principal object for which the Egyptian lived was the pleasures, the delights of the life to come. This was the principal incentive for living with the Egyptians, and that the Hebrews were

strangers to this highly developed conception of immortality, shows that there was not a very lively intellectual intercourse between the Hebrews and the Egyptians, for all through these centuries, until quite late in their history they have no conception of a hereafter, as it was conceived by the Egyptians, or anything approximating it. The Hebrew looked forward only to Sheol, a colorless existence in the under world, and the greatest blessing that was held up to him was long life and prosperity. Whenever motives for good conduct are offered, long life and prosperity always acompanied them. Consequently the supreme boon to which the Hebrew looked forward was the enjoyment of long life and prosperity here on earth, and punishment, among the different forms which it took, had this for its most dreaded, namely, premature death. How it happened that the Jews, in their long contact with the Egyptians during this long period of bondage, never adopted this thoery of the future life which the Egyptians held in such very detailed from, is one of the mysteries of the science of comparative religion.

We are told in the Book of Deuteronomy that "no man knoweth the grave of Moses unto this day." But while the tombs of the Pharaohs have been identified much that they achieved has been utterly forgotten. Nevertheless, by contrast, the name of the great liberator and legislator, who gave his life as a great renunciation for the sake of his fellow countrymen,—that name has been immortalized and shines as a beacon light for all the world.

HOW TO GET SALVATION.

By R. B. Marsh.

The idea that Jesus is a personal savior, that he bears our sins, and appeases God's just anger, and insures heaven to those who accept him is the doctrine that people of loose lives and selfish habits crave. The clergy have made a place for themselves by preaching this, and they will not change, and tell the people

that salvation, like education, is a matter of personal effort; that the judgment awaiting us all is not in what or in whom we have believed, but I was sick, poor, in prison, hungry, in want, and ye ministered or did not minister. The teaching of Jesus has been so corrupted, overlaid with heathen superstitions, that I doubt if it can be rescued. Other religions are in the same sad case. They were good at first, but the priests, to make money, have changed and corrupted them. There is money in making a man believe that by paying a priest to do something for you or your loved ones, heaven is insured. There is more in telling a man the plain truth, that selfishness condemns a man and charity saves him. Not charity given to a priest or a church, but really helping with word and deed those who need.

Tolstoi has spent his life in this work, but it is the custom of the press to sneer at him. Herron had to resign his professorship on account of his teaching. When he tries it as long as Tolstoi has, or even as long as I have, he will not be as hopeful. Acts, deeds, are the all important things in this world. It has been abundantly proven that men may have any belief, however holy; any faith, however lofty, and yet live mean, low lives; do vile, abhorrent deeds. The prophets put the emphasis on deeds. "Blessed are they that do his commandments." "Not Lord, Lord, but doing the will of the Father," says Jesus. "He that doeth righteously is righteous," says the apostle. There is no proof of faith or right belief but doing right. There is no service of God or love of the Savior but doing good to those who need, helping those who suffer. Millions have been slain for religion's sake; only those who save life and bring peace on earth are the truly religious.

Every parable of Jesus has to do with deeds, every commandment is summed up in loving others as one's self. The old and the new agree only in this, the essence of all religions is only goodness in thought, word and deed.

Gibbon, the great historian, tells us: "As long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters." If public opinion

was as it should be Pingree would be regarded as a greater man than Dewey. The opinion of the common people has more influence than is generally thought. As long as success in war and great possessions are commonly regarded as the surest ways in which greatness can be achieved, men of energy and ability will seek one or the other of these means to acquire greatness in the eyes of the world.

Courage and energy are great natural gifts, and men who have achieved success in war and in finance might have blessed mankind, and left even a greater fellowing than Buddha or Jesus. The heroes in war and the men of great riches die and are forgotten, but the men of large benevolence live forever in the hearts of mankind.

WHO IS THE INFIDEL?

By Sam Walter Foss.

Who is the infidel? 'Tis he
Who deems man's thought should not be free,
Who'd veil truth's faintest ray of light
From breaking on the human sight;
'Tis he who purposes to bind
The slightest fetter on the mind,
Who fears lest wreck and wrong be wrought
To leave man loose with his own thought;
Who, in the clash of brain with brain,
Is fearful lest the truth be slain,
That wrong may win and right may flee—
This is the infidel. 'Tis he.

Who is the infidel? 'Tis he
Who puts a bound on what may be;
Who fears time's upward slope shall end
On some far summit—and descend;
Who trembles lest the long-borne light,

Far-seen, shall lose itself in night;
Who doubts that life shall rise from death
When the old order perisheth;
That all God's spaces may be cross't
And not a single soul be lost—
Who doubts all this, whoe'er he be,
This is the infidel. 'Tis he.

EDITORIAL.

LABELS AND IDEALS.

That there are churches which greatly overrate the names by which they are known is in all probability true. The Christian Register tells of a church which, burning to signalize its liberty, ostentatiously seceded from the Unitarian name and thought it had wrought a new emancipation for itself by changing its label. Knowing nothing of the whereabouts or character of this church, we can only express our hope that this case of extreme independence has something more than the humorous aspect presented by the Register's report. How ridiculous it would be for any body of intelligent liberal people to suppose that by the mere adoption of a different name their organization had been essentially or radically changed. The probability is that the church in question adopted the new label because it was an expression of a new principle or ideal which the name Unitarian cannot connote without doing violence to the ethics of interpretation and that the emancipation achieved consisted in the advance to a position more modern and cosmopolitan than the "religion of Jesus" to which Unitarianism committed itself at the National Conference in 1894. The religion of universal Man, for instance, the religion that pays due homage to Jesus, Buddha, Zoroaster and all other prophets and founders in proportion to the truths they have taught, the work they have done, the inspiration their lives afford, such a religion, we hold, is

broader and more satisfying than the religion of Jesus or of any other individual founder, and if the church to which the Christian Register refers should have adopted such a substitute for Unitarianism and a label whereby to express the change, its action is not to be described as "humorous," however "unnecessary" it may have appeared to Unitarian eyes. Who knows but that this independent society, like others once of the Unitarian communion, may be patiently awaiting the day when the boasted freedom of the Unitarian fellowship will become a reality, making it possible for these free churches that have been excommunicated by the provincialism of the Unitarian bond of union to find themselves once more under the old roof and by the old fireside and round the dear old family mahogany.

A DISORGANIZING FREEDOM.

Occasionally one hears it said in liberal circles that every man should be free to follow the dictates of his own reason and conscience. But such individualism can have only a disorganizing tendency and must of necessity leave all open questions forever unsettled. Each individual, indeed, should be accorded perfect freedom of thought, but at the same time should submit the results of his independent thinking to the higher objective court of universal reason as expressed in what Dr. Abbot has called "the consensus of the competent," or the agreement of all persons competent to think on the given question. This appeal to an objective criterion of truth saves sheer individualism from inevitable agnosticism in the search for truth and from inability to organize for the propagation of truth. A Free Church, while respecting the rights of each member to the free exercise of his own reason, simultaneously insists on the necessity of appealing from individual to universal reason, from a subjective to an objective standard, holding that all ethical and religious problems, still open and unsolved, can be settled only by such an appeal. No unsettled question on any subject ever reached the goal of solution except by supplementing the free private judgment of the individual with the verification of that higher

free court which is universal reason. It makes no difference what the accepted truth is, the history of its gradual acceptance is the passage from individual to universal verification. Without that it would have remained an open question, unsettled, simply for want of this ulterior confirmation of the correctness of the individual's discovery, and producing a disorganizing effect because of that lack. Individualism can be only a centrifugal, never a centripetal force and the movement that takes its stand on individual freedom alone thereby dooms itself to the anarchy which is dismemberment and the agnosticism which is intellectual despair.

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